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Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system: recommendations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly during the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review negotiations. It complements the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations (A/71/63-E/2016/8). That report made it clear that the United Nations development system is uniquely qualified to support national implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, it needs to reposition itself to respond to both the opportunities and challenges of the universal, transformative and ambitious nature of the Agenda.

The new development era calls for a new dynamic ways of thinking, new ways of acting and new ways of organizing. The United Nations development system has embraced this vision and has already taken steps in this direction. The independent team of advisers that supported the discussions of Member States in the course of the dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system has provided bold ideas for a way forward.

The recommendations found in this report offer building blocks for change, to be realized through a phased approach. The 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review is the first step forward. It provides a critical opportunity for Member States to chart the course for the United Nations development in the short and medium term, while simultaneously laying the foundations for the future.

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I. Introduction

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is ambitious in its Goals and targets, bringing together the world's development needs in an interconnected whole. The integrated and universal nature of the 2030 Agenda raises the bar high. It presents not only an unprecedented challenge to the United Nations and its development system, but also an unrivalled opportunity for a prosperous, peaceful, sustainable and equitable world.

2. Both challenges and opportunities are greater in a world where the needs and dynamics have changed. Member States' growing capacities, newly engaged and resourceful development players, global challenges that know no borders, rising inequality, protracted crises and other trends that distinguish today's playing field call for a collective response. The need for collective action demands that the United Nations development system delivers a unified and targeted response, cutting across the sectors and pillars of the work of the United Nations, by stepping up its leadership, developing tailor-made solutions, adopting a multi-stakeholder approach and cutting through vertical organizational lines to strengthen horizontal results and accountability to ultimately align its response with the 2030 Agenda.

3. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations (A/71/63-E/2016/8) highlighted the expected role of the United Nations development system in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, framing it around the "what", its functions, and the "how", its operational and institutional set-up. The report made it clear that this requires a profound rethinking of the United Nations development system, because, while the development system is uniquely qualified to support national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, it needs to reposition itself to do so.

4. The transformed development landscape, with its ambition, interconnectedness and universality, calls for a system[1] whose parts can work in tandem. Entities of the United Nations development system were created and have evolved to serve specific and differing needs, reflected in their diverse specialization and spheres of influence. They have often risen above their specific mandates and worked collectively. But the 2030 Agenda requires the development system to pursue much more integrated approaches and create cross-sectoral synergies to deliver highly interlinked results at all levels, supported by an enabling funding and governance architecture.

[1] For the purpose of the present report, the "system" is intended as the United Nations development system, unless otherwise specified. There is no commonly agreed definition of the terms "the United Nations development system" and "operational activities for development". For the purposes of the funding analysis included in document A/71/63-E/2016/8, the definitions include those entities and activities linked to contributions in line with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development definition of official development assistance (ODA) (see A/71/63-E/2016/8, para. 17 and footnote 2). This is not intended to imply that entities listed as part of the United Nations development system for the funding analysis are part of the United Nations development system for other purposes. For example, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is not part of the United Nations development system for purposes other than for the funding analysis provided in document A/71/63-E/2016/8, in line with its non-operational humanitarian coordination mandate.

5. The United Nations development system has recognized this moment as a window of opportunity and has already taken practical measures, both individually and collectively, to rise to the challenge of doing business differently and deliver the type of joined up support that is essential for advancing sustainable development. It has done so by capitalizing on its diversity, pursuing a human rights-based and people-centred approach, placing stronger focus on its normative role and putting the imperative of addressing inequalities and eliminating discrimination at the heart of its interventions. The development system recognizes that its primary focus should be enabling the achievement of interlinked and transformative results at the country level and promoting national ownership. To that end, the development system has renewed its commitment to deliver together across mandates, sectors and institutional boundaries, working within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, using more integrated and interconnected approaches. This includes evidence-based analysis, integrated planning and joint reporting; empowered leadership on the ground sustained by modern, efficient, joined up operations; increased synergies at the headquarters, regional and country levels; shared standards and criteria for partnership and new partnership instruments; and harnessing the power of the data revolution. The development system is also committed to doing its part to move towards more inclusive governance and more robust, coherent and innovative financing, in order to implement the 2030 Agenda.

6. To find further unity in its diversity, the United Nations development system needs to adjust its functions, funding, governance structures, organizational arrangements, capacity and partnership approaches — six fundamental areas — to ensure that the system can rise to the challenges of a new development era. As the world was still finalizing the contours of the new development agenda, the Economic and Social Council recognized that "we stand at a major juncture in the history of development and that the United Nations development system must realign". It therefore decided, in its resolution 2014/14, to convene a transparent and inclusive dialogue involving Member States and all relevant stakeholders on the longer-term positioning of the development system, taking into consideration the interlinkages among the six areas mentioned above. The dialogue spanned over 18 months, during which Member States discussed how the development system should avail itself of the opportunity of the new sustainable development agenda, helped by analytical papers and proposals from the United Nations Development Group, the Secretariat, independent experts and Member States, as well as from the independent team of advisers appointed by the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council.

7. The key messages that emerged over the course of the dialogue include the following:

- The changing and fast-evolving development context is rooted in growing complexity and interconnectedness and increased diversification of capacity of programme countries. The new and ambitious development agenda, the nature of global challenges and crises, and the emerging role and needs of middle-income countries, as well as the continuing priorities of those most in need, have notable implications for the United Nations development system.
- The United Nations development system is at a critical juncture. The new development landscape and the nature of the 2030 Agenda require significant strengthening of system-level capacity. The system needs to build on and scale

up coordination and coherence towards a path of integrated thinking, planning and operating, to achieve collective outcomes. What will be required is a new mindset and a change in the organizational culture, as well as a vision for change to equal the ambition and determination that led to the agreement of the 2030 Agenda.

- The new development paradigm requires clarity on what the United Nations development system should or should not do in given country contexts. This should be based on the functions that the system is best qualified to perform with respect to national needs, as well as to global challenges requiring collective action. These functions were identified as support for normative work; upstream policy support and data; convening, leveraging and advocating; thought-leadership; capacity development, technical assistance and direct programme support where relevant; and support to humanitarian and crisis operations.

- A new funding architecture is needed to support the United Nations development system in the delivery of its mandates. This will require enhancing the predictability and quality of resources, increasing non-earmarked core contributions, exploring outcome-level earmarking, strengthening system-wide funding and exploring innovative funding mechanisms.

- Governance structures within the United Nations development system, both vertical and horizontal, as well as at the country level, need adjusting so they can strategically guide the system, individually and across institutional boundaries, and ensure that the work of the system is fully aligned with national priorities.

- Organizational arrangements at the headquarters, regional and country levels need to be modified in order to better respond to countries' differentiated needs and to be better geared to deliver results effectively and efficiently. An ambitious vision should be established for rationalization of field presence and further harmonization and simplification of business practices.

- Investments in staff development and high-calibre staff with skill sets to effectively contribute to national development efforts will be needed to ensure that the United Nations development system has the right mix of capacities and skills, including leadership skills and high-quality policy and programme advice, and the ability to work with multiple stakeholders in multisectoral responses. System-wide guidelines for staffing, as well as increased common human resource planning among entities, could further strengthen the ability of the development system to work together at the country level.

- Partnerships are critical to realizing the promise of the 2030 Agenda, and they should complement the role of the United Nations development system in supporting the Agenda. They should primarily be driven by the specific needs of countries and augment existing national efforts.

- Bridging the divides and strengthening the synergies across the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding nexus are critical to realizing and sustaining peace and development gains, mindful of the distinct operational realities in each area of work. This should be done in a manner which respects and safeguards humanitarian action and the space for emergency humanitarian response.

- Finally, achieving interlinkages and alignment among all six of the areas identified in the dialogue will be key, and it will require governance, management and planning at the global, regional and country levels that ensure a high degree of accountability, transparency and responsiveness in the delivery of United Nations operational activities for development.

8. The independent team of advisers contributed to the debate with an analysis of the current state of play and proposals to tackle those challenges. Addressing the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Secretary-General stated that the 2030 Agenda would require a stronger, better-integrated and more strategic United Nations development system, that the United Nations Development Group had been actively engaged in making that happen and that the international team of advisers had offered a vision of a stronger system "working as one". He added that Governments, local authorities, businesses and civil society, as well as the United Nations, must learn to think differently. He expressed his trust that all would benefit from the bold diagnostic work by the independent team of advisers and consider their wide range of proposals.

9. The proposals of the independent team of advisers included the adoption of a system-wide global strategic framework to align the United Nations development system with a common set of principles and objectives for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; the establishment of a single Sustainable Development Board to guide the operational activities of the development system as a whole; and the redesignation of the Deputy Secretary-General as the "Deputy Secretary-General for Sustainable Development", responsible for the oversight and funding of the resident coordinator system. In addition, the independent team of advisers proposed to organize the development system around functional groupings, to align the funding of the development system with a consolidated budget, to review the development system field presence to ensure alignment with countries' needs and priorities, to establish a system-wide support mechanism for partnership to ensure a common approach to external players, and to adopt a common human resource policy to ensure an international civil service dedicated to "working as one".

10. A large number of Member States welcomed the diagnostic work of the independent team of advisers; however, there were divergent views on the team's far-reaching proposals. All the proposals are reflected in the summary of the second phase of the dialogue, issued by the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council.[2]

11. The present report draws on input not only from the independent team of advisers, but also from the United Nations Development Group, Member States and experts who engaged in the dialogue. It contains recommendations for consideration by Member States.

12. From the Economic and Social Council dialogue and the continuing work of the United Nations development system, it is evident that a comprehensive approach is necessary to ensure that the development system truly functions as one. The connection between the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets makes it even more pressing that the interlinkages and the alignment of the areas identified in the dialogue are coherent and mutually supportive, at the agency level and system-wide, as well as in relation to the pillars of the work of the United Nations.

[2] www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/qcpr/summary-of-second-phase-of-ecosoc-dialogue-2016.pdf.

13. Moving forward, change will be realized through a phased approach. Some areas can be tackled now, while others will require a longer-term horizon. The dialogue helped to distinguish issues that need attention in the short and medium term from those that will require more time. The new quadrennial comprehensive policy review offers a critical opportunity to address some of the issues in the next four years; to do so, it should be redesigned as the tool for strategically guiding, implementing and monitoring results and the critical changes needed to ensure that the United Nations development system can truly work as a system. And while guiding the development system in the initial years of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the quadrennial comprehensive policy review can lay the foundations for fundamental changes in the medium and longer term.

14. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review is not a panacea to implement the global aspirations of the new development agenda. While it can improve the functioning of the United Nations development system as a whole in some areas, other aspects will need more work by the different entities, as well as by Member States. Evolving from coordination to integration is a shared responsibility of the United Nations system and Governments. The new quadrennial comprehensive policy review can prepare the groundwork and help maintain the momentum. The system has proved before that it is capable of ambitious change. Member States have proved their readiness to support these efforts. The time to act is now: together we can meet the ambition that we have set for ourselves.

II. Core functions of the United Nations development system in support of the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

A. Scope and nature of the 2030 Agenda

15. The scope and nature of the 2030 Agenda require both integration and targeting of the functions of the United Nations development system. With an increasingly diversified development landscape and the varying levels and types of needs, capacities and priorities among countries and regions, it is clear that the development challenge cannot be tackled alone. The development system should not be involved in every aspect of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Instead, its core functions must be derived from the absolute, comparative and competitive advantages of the United Nations, as well as its primary purpose to deliver demand-driven results at the country level, firmly anchored in national leadership and ownership.

16. The role of the United Nations development system remains essential in providing normative policy support, delivering targeted and context-specific efforts and supporting capacity development with responses that are grounded in human-rights approaches, in order to leave no one behind. The development system is uniquely qualified to support Member States in the implementation of global agreements, norms and standards. The universal membership of the United Nations also gives the system an unrivalled ability to bring stakeholders together at the global, regional and country levels. Its legitimacy and impartiality put the system in a unique position to support development cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation. In addition, the work of the development system is geared

towards capacity-building and technical assistance, and it can help strengthen and build synergies through development, humanitarian and peacebuilding interventions, in line with the 2030 Agenda and the resolutions on sustaining peace.

17. Countries with special challenges, such as conflict-affected countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries adversely affected by disasters, will continue to require various forms of direct support and service delivery through integrated approaches, including in the development, humanitarian and peace sectors to build resilience and sustain and prevent the reversal of development gains. And in the new development arena, traditional models of assistance offering direct support for basic needs and services, where circumstances are amenable, will need to evolve towards upstream integrated policy support, sustained by efforts to improve the quality, quantity and disaggregation of data to guide policymaking, planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

18. To meet the Sustainable Development Goals, the regional dimension is pivotal. It provides an important feedback loop as an aggregator and bridge between processes and collective initiatives at global and national levels, both internally, within entities of the United Nations system, and externally, with other regional and subregional organizations and actors.

B. Aligning the United Nations development system functions to the 2030 Agenda

Recommendations

1. Align core functions of the United Nations development system to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

19. In essence, the core functions of the United Nations development system could be identified as:

- Integrated normative support for implementation, monitoring and reporting on global agreements, norms and standards
- Integrated, evidence-based policy advice and thought-leadership, to support the efforts of countries to embed the Sustainable Development Goals into national and local plans and budgets
- Capacity development and technical assistance
- Convening of stakeholders across constituencies, leveraging of partnerships and facilitating knowledge-sharing and South-South and triangular cooperation
- Direct support and service delivery, particularly in countries in special situations, such as those affected by conflict, displacement and disasters
- Comprehensive and disaggregated data collection and analysis to inform evidence-based, context-specific and inclusive policy choices.

2. Tailor functions in response to different country needs

20. With the growing capacities of countries and the diversification of their needs and priorities, there is a need for a more precise agreement on what functions the United Nations development system is best qualified to perform in order to respond

to national demands. Any problems that may arise cannot be resolved using universal development templates; the system needs to be as context-specific as possible, providing individual diagnoses and solutions. The different capacities and needs of countries require the development system to design individual, tailor-made approaches, reflecting the specific circumstances of every country. Least developed countries, low-income countries and conflict- and disaster-affected countries must continue to be given priority. At the same time, the challenges of the increasing number of middle-income countries, with their high number of poor populations and large youth populations, where the impact of crises may in some cases be cross-border in nature, also call for targeted action.

3. Address poverty in all its forms and dimensions

21. The complexity of the new development landscape and the interconnectedness of the new development agenda call for a comprehensive approach if the United Nations development system is to achieve its goal of leaving no one behind. Because traditional ways of measuring poverty and classifying countries are primarily based on per capita income, they do not reflect the different vulnerabilities, risks, volatility and mixed capacities within and between countries. As a result, some countries are impaired in terms of their access to official development assistance (ODA), concessional financing and preferential trading and the achievement of debt sustainability. Middle-income countries in particular are at risk of middle-income traps and the reversal of fragile development gains. Poverty must be captured and addressed in all its forms and dimensions according to national definitions. The development system should move beyond traditional country ranking, based on income alone, and should develop a new multidimensional way of assessing country needs on the basis of the Sustainable Development Goal targets and indicators, building on the experiences of those entities that have already moved in this direction.

4. Strengthen the regional dimension of the work of the United Nations development system

22. The interrelated nature of today's challenges also calls for greater emphasis on the regional aspects of the work of the United Nations development system. Strengthening the regional level, including links between the regional commissions and other United Nations entities present at the regional level, on the one hand, and between the United Nations development system and the non-United Nations regional and subregional organizations and actors, on the other, is critical to connecting and sustaining global and national efforts. While tailored to specific national and local conditions, national sustainable development strategies can benefit from regional peer learning and be mutually supportive among countries, and the full potential of South-South and triangular cooperation needs to be tapped within and among different regions. Options for strengthening regional and/or subregional platforms and mechanisms should be matched by exploring new ways to enable the provision of coherent, effective and efficient system-wide support, in particular in relation to trans-border, intraregional and cross-regional issues, and the provision of specialized support to country offices. The regional dimension must leverage the internal United Nations system-wide contribution, as well as collaboration with other regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental actors, such as civil society networks, academic institutions, foundations, think tanks and the private

sector. In that regard, the role of the regional commissions is strategic, and there is a need to leverage their assets in the regions.

5. Clarify the role of the United Nations in developed countries

23. In addition to the interconnected nature of today's global challenges, the 2030 Agenda has also highlighted the universal scope of its Goals and targets. The commitment to transforming the world for the people, the planet, prosperity and peace applies to developing and developed countries alike. Achievements can be made and sustained only if developed countries take significant and appropriate action as well, whether on the policy, resource or technical front. The United Nations development system needs to consider and develop clear lines of action in developed countries, building on the experiences of specialized agencies, which by virtue of their mandates, operate on a universal agenda. Thus, there could be merit in carrying out a review of existing arrangements with developed countries, including by non-resident agencies.

6. Move towards a system-wide approach to South-South and triangular cooperation

24. As the United Nations development system embarks on the ambitious path set out by the 2030 Agenda, the strengths of all players must be leveraged. Today more countries have a dual role, as recipients and contributors, in global development. Leveraging the contribution of South-South and triangular cooperation is becoming increasingly important, and the development system must increase its efforts in this regard. Existing platforms and practices of the development system for South-South and triangular cooperation need to be reviewed to ensure coordination and some degree of consolidation, as well as a coherent system-wide approach. The wide range of expertise within the system should be brought together and integrated into joint work wherever relevant.

7. Promote and protect human rights so that no one is left behind

25. The 2030 Agenda is unequivocally anchored in human rights. It is about leaving no one behind, first reaching those furthest behind and addressing inequality and discrimination. The United Nations development system has to support Governments in promoting and protecting human rights for all, placing people at the centre of its development efforts and working for their empowerment as active agents of sustainable development. This will require the development system to develop capacities and provide integrated policy support and advice in making international human rights standards an integral part of sustainable development strategies and policies, in line with national obligations under international human rights law.

8. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

26. While leveraging the strengths of all, it must be remembered that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals will not be possible without the full and equal participation, leadership and empowerment of women and girls. The United Nations development system must further strengthen the linkage between the normative and operational work in these areas. It must continue to invest in women as agents of change, maintaining a strong focus on gender equality results and increasing investments in gender capacity and expertise of staff throughout the

system. The use of accountability frameworks should be continued at the headquarters and country levels, through a new generation of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women that ensures stronger linkage between institutional performance and development results, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

III. Funding for the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

27. For the United Nations development system to be able to perform its functions, it must be supported by an adequate funding architecture. Existing funding practices, however, are characterized by a number of challenges and are not in line with the ambitious demands that the development system must respond to. The growing imbalance between core and non-core funding, together with few flexible, inter-agency pooled funding modalities, has introduced a higher degree of "bilateralization" in the funding of the development system. In some entities, this pattern keeps most funding outside of the direct purview of the governing bodies, thus following donor priorities that may differ from country needs. As a result, funding is increasingly driving functions. This trend must be reversed.

28. If the United Nations development system is going to operate more effectively and with greater impact, alignment between functions and funding is essential. It is the foundation of harmonious interlinkage with other critical variables, such as the governance, organizational arrangements, capacity and impact and partnership approaches of the development system. Reversing the current trend and ensuring that form follows function will require the scaling up of existing funding mechanisms that have shown promise and the exploration of new financing strategies, including ones that can leverage additional resources through innovative financing mechanisms.

29. The onset of the new development era provides an opportunity for the United Nations development system to adjust its funding models. To do so, it will be necessary to make the case for what, why and how contributors should provide funding at the entity level and system-wide. In the end, the performance of the development system will also depend on its ability to mobilize adequate and high-quality funding to perform its core functions and maintain its absolute and comparative advantages.

A. Scaling up core and "core-like" funding and achieving a more logical attribution of funds

30. The slow growth in real terms in core resources over the past 15 years, combined with most non-core resources being strictly earmarked to specific projects, as well as a high dependence on a small group of donors, makes the funding base of the United Nations development system highly susceptible to political and economic shifts in donor countries. This growing imbalance has been magnified by the lack of full cost recovery by many entities of the development system, proportionally from core and non-core funding sources. These and other factors have led to the discussion of the "critical mass" of core resources needed by United Nations entities to deliver on their core functions.

31. Alignment of functions and funding does not happen in a vacuum; it results from the quality of substantive deliberations at the governance level. Structured financing dialogues can build strong ownership by Member States and other stakeholders of an entity's strategic intent and funding requirements and gaps. They build trust and improve incentives for donors to provide support in the form of core and "core-like" resources. In that regard, entities of the United Nations development system could strengthen their existing structured financing dialogues by building on the lessons learned from the dialogues undertaken by other entities in the system.

32. The cross-cutting nature of the 2030 Agenda makes it particularly important to complement core funding with more flexible and predictable earmarked funding. The United Nations development system has accrued a wealth of experience since the first United Nations inter-agency pooled fund was established over a decade ago. In the period 2013-2015, inter-agency pooled funds mobilized an average of some $1.8 billion per year, which represents 8 to 9 per cent of overall non-core resource flows to the development system. Pooled funding mechanisms have proved to be useful instruments for strengthening system-wide coherence and enhancing integration in the delivery of operational activities for development. At the same time, design matters, and there is need to ensure that each fund can attract sufficient resources to bring about transformative change.

Recommendations

1. Establish clarity on core functions and their financing logic

33. In their strategic plans and integrated funding frameworks, entities of the United Nations development system need to make a clearer distinction between what are considered core activities and the type of funding used to finance these activities. In addition, the integrated ambition of the 2030 Agenda challenges the development system to move beyond a year-by-year, sector-by-sector, project-by-project approach to sustainable and predictable funding and towards a medium-term, more robust categorization approach that can best support the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. Broaden the donor base and enhance the core resource base

34. The United Nations development system and its partners should explore innovative ways to broaden its donor base and provide incentives for existing donors to contribute more flexible, multi-year funding. This has added urgency in the context of the 2030 Agenda and will require the entities of the development system to work actively and transparently to build trust with Member States and other prospective partners and to make the case for adequate and predictable levels of core funding and complementary non-core resources. Entities of the development system could also consider implementing negotiated voluntary core pledges, or a voluntary indicative scale of contributions, to help enhance their core resource base.

3. Strengthen and institutionalize structured financing dialogues

35. The executive boards of the funds and programmes and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies in the United Nations system should, as appropriate, strengthen and institutionalize annual structured dialogues on how to finance the outcomes defined in the strategic planning cycle of their respective entities. The financing dialogues should be part of a vision and strategy for multi-year resource

mobilization that will leverage existing funding successes and reduce reliance on year-by-year and fragmented resource mobilization tactics. This would involve establishing clarity on the core functions of entities and their financing logic. They would reaffirm the underlying principles and definitions of the funding system and determine resource mobilization targets, including quality of funding, as well as the most appropriate mechanisms for delivery and, where relevant, proposals for burden-sharing among Member States. A review could be conducted to assess the extent to which the current format of existing financing dialogues has been successful in achieving these objectives, based on evidence in actual funding patterns, and the impact that the dialogues have had towards building trust among Member States and other stakeholders.

4. Develop well-designed and sufficiently resourced pooled funding mechanisms to act as gravity centres for the coherence of the United Nations development system

36. The United Nations development system must increase its efforts to capitalize on the recognized comparative advantages of pooled funds, while addressing potential drawbacks such as the risk of increased transaction costs when funds are too small. Pooled funds should be well designed, in line with priorities defined at the global, regional and national levels and sufficiently funded. Such funding should complement, not replace, agency-specific funding. Donor countries, as well as others able to do so, should scale up their contributions to United Nations inter-agency pooled funds to promote integrated, cross-cutting United Nations initiatives and support efforts towards the achievement of collective outcomes in line with the Sustainable Development Goals in a coherent way through development, humanitarian, peacebuilding and other assistance, such as assistance in the area of climate adaptation. It is crucial for the development system to achieve an adequate level of pooled funding that is well designed and in line with priorities defined at the national and local levels, in order to incentivize the system to leverage more resources across entities.

5. Attribute an incremental cost to all strictly earmarked contributions

37. Differentiated or preferential cost recovery rates applied to thematic and other softly earmarked contributions should not lead to an increase in the amount of core resources spent on subsidizing non-programme costs of non-core activities.[3] Therefore, to encourage such flexible contributions, in addition to implementing full cost recovery, an incremental cost should be attributed to all strictly earmarked contributions to cover extra administrative costs associated with the handling and reporting of such contributions.

B. Exploring innovative financing modalities

38. The breadth and depth of the 2030 Agenda require the United Nations development system to explore options for more use of innovative financing sources aimed at increasing the impact of the limited funding it receives. The Leading Group on Innovative Financing for Development[4] defines innovative development finance

[3] Some United Nations entities apply a 1 per cent reduction to the normal cost recovery rate for thematic contributions.

[4] Sixty-three countries working in conjunction with international organizations and civil society.

as all mechanisms that raise funds for development that are complementary to ODA and predictable and stable in nature. Examples of innovative finance include leveraging larger private flows using limited public finance, thematic bonds that dedicate proceeds to specific development goals, and issuing new forms of taxes and levies to mobilize resources for development. The development system could build on lessons learned by several vertical funds that are currently using innovative mechanisms in an effort to enhance value for money. These include funds such as the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the Adaptation Fund.

39. To help address the significant financing needs of the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations development system will also need to deepen partnerships and establish new arrangements with international financial institutions. Experience can be drawn from the Middle East and North Africa Region, where the United Nations development system is partnering with the World Bank Group and the Islamic Development Bank to strengthen coordination between development and humanitarian assistance and support middle-income countries with concessional financing for development projects addressing the impact of the influx of refugees.

Recommendations

1. Give priority to innovative financing approaches

40. The United Nations development system should engage in innovative financing approaches that support risk-sharing and the use of limited public resources to leverage larger private resources, including from domestic sources, while avoiding possible conflict of interest in relation to the normative role of United Nations entities. This is especially important in situations where resources are scarce and there are persistent inequalities and vulnerabilities. As a starting point, the financing section in the updated United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) guidance should be fully implemented. In this context, it will be important to assess the overall impact of the development system by being able to quantify the amount of private funds that the United Nations has leveraged.

2. Mitigate risks around innovative financing

41. While exploring inventive ways to secure funding, it will be important to mitigate risks. In this regard, the United Nations development system should establish a platform for sharing knowledge on innovative financing, in order to learn from the experience of engagements with innovative instruments. Additionally, a system-wide approach to partnership that builds on best practices and existing due diligence mechanisms and expands the reach of the development system while protecting the United Nations brand will help United Nations entities to engage in innovative ways to raise and mobilize funds while minimizing risk management costs. Rather than have multiple entities use financial and human resources to vet the same partners repeatedly, an established approach to partnership throughout the system, together with the necessary capacity to support it, would help ensure that the development system can be involved more easily in new ways of doing business and securing resources while preserving its values, integrity and independence and keeping transaction costs at a minimum. The benefits of a system-wide approach to partnership are discussed in more detail below.

3. Strengthen partnerships with international financial institutions

42. In an effort to leverage all players to achieve collective outcomes, including by raising additional financial resources, the United Nations development system should strengthen partnerships with international financial institutions. Partnerships with such institutions will also allow the development system to benefit from their strengths, in terms of the resources they hold and the expertise they have in working with non-grant financing instruments and the private sector.

C. Enhancing transparency and accountability of funding flows

43. Improving transparency and information flow on the sources, use and impact of both non-earmarked and earmarked funding is critical to enhancing resource mobilization at the entity level and system-wide. A culture of transparency can also foster better alignment between the preferences of contributors and the strategic intent and work priorities of entities. Capitalizing on new opportunities to mobilize flexible, predictable and stable funding would also put additional demands on the quality of data, analysis and reporting on financial flows. For example, it will be critically important to strengthen harmonized approaches towards reporting in the 2030 Agenda environment. From the perspective of contributors, traditional and non-traditional, this would provide a picture of how their contributions fit, not only in the context of activities by individual entities but also in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals and related targets.

44. The United Nations system data catalogue launched by the High-level Committee on Management in March 2016 is a positive step towards addressing the need for quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data. The data catalogue, which was designed in close collaboration with the International Aid Transparency Initiative secretariat, makes United Nations system data open and accessible to the public and other key stakeholders and improves the availability and accessibility of information, in order to better inform others about the system's analytical and decision-making processes.

Recommendations

1. Adhere to a common standard for reporting on contributions and expenditures

45. In order to increase the availability of current and forward-looking information that is outcome-specific for more detailed analysis and to improve support for future planning, all United Nations entities should publish timely, transparent, harmonized and open high-quality data on funding, including by adopting the International Aid Transparency Initiative standard for reporting data, sharing experiences and lessons learned from the strong performances of some funds and programmes in this area. In addition, United Nations entities that have not already done so should develop and improve publicly accessible online systems that map data on donor contributions and expenditure allocations.

2. Move towards an integrated financing approach at the country level

46. Efforts at the global level should be paired by efforts at the country level. United Nations country teams need to shift to an integrated financing approach that identifies all financial needs and the development, humanitarian and peace and

security flows to match them, to be supported by the United Nations development system, in collaboration with other actors when needed. The integrated financing approach would involve United Nations country teams identifying an appropriate mix of financial instruments that best complement and leverage other sources of development finance, including private, public, external and domestic resources that may not flow through the development system. United Nations country teams would then strive to nudge these resources towards national development priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals. This will require not only behavioural change but also the development of new staff skills and capacities, in areas such as how to develop partnerships, as well as a better grasp of innovative finance sources.

IV. System-wide transparency, accountability and governance

A. Transparency and accountability

47. Just as optimizing funding practices will be vital for sustaining the United Nations development system in its functions, the roles of transparency and accountability cannot be underestimated. The importance of transparency and accountability has been gaining momentum in recent years, particularly as a result of the increasing complexity of the international aid architecture and the development of new technologies for capturing and providing access to information and data. The increasing involvement of new players in the development arena, which is likely to continue to grow in the coming years, further highlights the need to identify new forms and build on existing mechanisms for transparency and accountability. This is critical to building trust, but it is also fundamental to effective financial and programmatic management.

48. Individual entities have taken steps towards cultivating a culture of increased transparency and accountability with several robust measures. At the headquarters level, several entities have created web portals with up-to-date information showing how they manage their resource flows in programmes and who they engage with in the implementation of some activities. At the country level, the standard operating procedures, which have been implemented to varying degrees, constitute an accountability framework that responds to the horizontal accountability of the entities of the United Nations development system as part of United Nations country teams, complementing agency-specific vertical accountability lines. This includes common budgetary frameworks, the management and accountability system and annual reports on joint results. In addition, United Nations entities have improved their accountability and oversight by implementing the International Public Sector Accounting Standards and by presenting timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information based on the International Aid Transparency Initiative standard for reporting data. Despite these advances, more can and should be done.

B. System-wide governance

49. A good governance architecture is required to ensure a culture of accountability and transparency. Strong governance mechanisms not only provide strategic guidance, exert oversight and ensure accountability, but also build trust between entities of the United Nations development system, Member States and other partners.

50. The current governance architecture of the United Nations development system is complex in its set-up, reach and capacity. Questions have been raised on whether it serves well the needs of a new development era. While answering such questions is the responsibility of Member States, there may be merit in exploring the governance architecture and its role in enabling the development system to respond to the demands of its beneficiaries.

51. The General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, executive boards and governing bodies of United Nations entities, in accordance with their respective mandates, constitute a multi-tiered intergovernmental policymaking and oversight system. Central organs set system-wide principles, goals and standards to guide the mandates of individual entities of the United Nations development system. The Council currently performs this role through the operational activities segment of its substantive session. While these governing bodies set the course, they have limited capacity to ensure that the various entities act on system-wide policy coherence and coordination in programming and operations that the 2030 Agenda requires. The Assembly resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review is currently the only instrument for system-wide governance of the development system. At times, these governing bodies lack the necessary information to step up their engagement, since the coverage and quality of system-wide statistics, analysis and reporting to allow governance review at the central level is quite limited.

52. Governing bodies of entities of the United Nations development system provide strategic guidance in line with the individual entities' mandates and oversight on the entities' strategic plans, budgets, policies and overall delivery of results. The governing bodies allow for a high level of accountability and transparency in the entities' delivery of their objectives. However, they generally operate in isolation from each other; decisions and policies of entities in one area may not necessarily be known or valued by those operating in another. In this regard, system-wide accountability for results at the country level could be further strengthened.

53. These horizontal challenges, which hamper cross-fertilization and integrated action, may be further complicated by the fact that the governing bodies of entities vary in their composition, size, representational character, areas of focus, source of support and working methods. Some of them have embraced multi-stakeholder engagement, while others continue to be solely Member State bodies. The ability of the governing bodies to provide strategic guidance on operational activities is also affected by variations in the frequency of their meetings. And while some governing bodies of individual entities may approve country programme documents, the reality is that programming is overseen primarily at the country level through various policy coordination mechanisms involving the respective Governments and the heads of United Nations entities. Few financial and human resources are allocated to support the work of these bodies, and secretariat support is often limited to just a few staff.

54. The 2030 Agenda requires more emphasis on collaborative intergovernmental guidance throughout the system, as well as forward-looking perspectives among Member States in decision-making. In that regard, the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review, while remaining at a more strategic level, should address the whole system directly and ensure that horizontal gaps are addressed, without prejudice to the important role of the respective governing bodies.

55. It is time to improve the ability of the Member States to provide effective guidance, both horizontally and within specific entity mandates. This is essential for the implementation of the highly complex and integrated agenda and the transformation of the United Nations development system so that it operates as a system.

Recommendations

1. Review the composition and working methods of governing bodies

56. There is a generally shared view among Member States that the composition of the governing bodies would need to be reviewed to increase the ownership and participation of Member States and to reflect a better geographical balance and multi-stakeholder participation, giving due consideration to the principles of equity and effectiveness in representation. Their capacity and working methods should also be reviewed. This could start by building on the experiences of those entities that have already taken steps to reform their governance mechanisms and embraced diverse governance models. An assessment should be undertaken of how such changes may affect the participation of Member States and funding streams. Specialized agencies could carry out such a review if it is deemed appropriate and within their established authority.

2. Convene dedicated Economic and Social Council meetings to strengthen horizontal guidance

57. The gap in horizontal governance could be filled by convening Economic and Social Council meetings aimed at guiding the system-wide functions and operations through the review of system-wide progress on "Operating as one", evaluations and other instruments. At the same time, the operational activities for development segment of the sessions of the Council should also be redesigned to provide better strategic oversight of the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. In line with the provisions of Article 62, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations, the Council may make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters and may make recommendations with respect to any such matters to the General Assembly and to the specialized agencies concerned.

V. Improving the functioning of the United Nations development system

58. Just as the 2030 Agenda requires a shift in funding practices and governance architecture, it also represents a marked departure in the ways that the United Nations development system needs to conduct and deliver its business to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. New organizational arrangements and business models are needed, guided by a new collective mindset.

59. This collective understanding must translate into differentiated models of presence that respond to country needs and improved efficiencies through more collaborative arrangements, joined up operational capacities and assets that build on different entities' strengths and enhanced partnership approaches that support the system in leveraging the strengths of all those involved to deliver on its mandates. Changing ways of working requires a mixture of tweaks and transformations, in a

carefully managed and sequenced process that maintains the integrity of results on the ground.

60. It all starts with the vision, skills and spirit of the United Nations development system workforce. Moving forward, it is imperative to ensure the right kind of people, competencies and incentives in the right places. The High-level Committee on Management has taken steps to further strengthen the international civil service as an independent, neutral, highly skilled and engaged resource. Among the key expected outcomes of this endeavour are a strengthened transformative leadership and management culture and an organizational environment that recognizes good performance, strengthens links to career development and sanctions poor performance. In this connection, many entities are also striving to adjust their internal mobility policies, including through practical means such as bilateral or multilateral exchanges from job pools.

61. This collective vision must also rest in the recognition that the world is now very different and that the United Nations must open itself to the realities of the twenty-first century, embracing innovation and a broader range of actors in the field of development. This increasingly diverse range of players offers enormous potential to leverage the differences and comparative advantages of each. And while the risks are being managed by building and expanding on good practices, the system will need to embrace partnerships as a rule, rather than as an exception. This is not just a matter of benefit, but also a matter of relevance.

62. Improved functioning of the United Nations development system is also based on the recognition that today's challenges require a system that primarily relies on its ability to work across sectors. The development system is fully committed to adopting coherent and complementary approaches to development, humanitarian and peacebuilding nexus and supporting multi-stakeholder planning mechanisms that incorporate the contributions of a diverse set of actors, as well as a common narrative on planning, programming, structural/architectural changes and funding issues.

A. Presence

63. The configuration of country presence needs to be aligned with national needs and the demands of the 2030 Agenda and to ensure cost-effectiveness. Not all United Nations entities necessarily have a comparative advantage in each country setting. They should gradually move away from models based primarily on representation towards other models better geared to the specific contexts, capacities and needs of countries, advances in communication technologies and contemporary ways of working together. In many instances, for example, a country could be supported from a regional or subregional location or through a multi-country office arrangement, depending on the needs and priorities. Non-resident agencies have many experiences and lessons to share and can help pave the way ahead in this regard.

64. The regional level has an important role to play in supporting these efforts. The regional commissions and their subregional offices could be leveraged in this context. Since more coherence and coordination of efforts are needed between the regional offices of individual United Nations entities and the regional commissions, regional arrangements need to be brought in line with the demands of the 2030 Agenda.

Recommendations

1. **Adopt flexible, cost-effective and highly collaborative business models and organizational arrangements at the regional, subregional, national and subnational levels**

65. There is clear scope for synergy and greater impact through improved and consolidated field presence, while ensuring flexibility to allow for country-specific needs and circumstances. This will allow the United Nations development system to move towards the modern and agile system that is needed to deliver on complex and interrelated priorities, to maximize resources while responding to needs at the regional, subregional, national and subnational levels.

2. **Review the field architecture of the United Nations entities**

66. In line with adopting a more collective, nimble and cost-effective presence on the ground, the field architecture of the United Nations development system needs to be reviewed, rationalized and aligned with the 2030 Agenda and demands from countries and regions. A system-wide mapping exercise should also be undertaken. Shifting towards more differentiated country office models with tailored support in response to individual country capacities, needs and priorities across goals, sectors, and borders is needed. Every entity would need to review its geographical coverage and working arrangements in countries, and also at the regional level. Joint premises and offices with technical experts from different agencies physically sitting together working on similar thematic issues and/or target groups can encourage innovation, reduce overhead costs and duplication of staff roles between United Nations entities. Governing boards, as appropriate, should look into this as a matter of priority and in the context of current and expected budgetary allocations. System-wide coordination and strategic discussions are needed to better match country needs with country presence.

3. **Create harmonized definitions to enhance coherence**

67. Harmonizing the different definitions and configurations of "regions" and "subregions" that currently exist across different United Nations entities will facilitate a number of activities throughout the United Nations development system, in particular the monitoring, reporting, following up and reviewing of progress in the Sustainable Development Goals. While not underestimating the political complexities of such an endeavour, it is long overdue. In this regard, the Economic and Social Council could invite all governing bodies to engage in a joint discussion on this issue, as appropriate.

B. Workforce and capacity

68. The functions of the 2030 Agenda require a shift in the vision, the skill sets and, in some cases, the balance of technical and managerial expertise of the United Nations development system in order for the system to deliver what is expected. The United Nations workforce will need not only the necessary capacities to face a much broader and more complex set of challenges, but also a clear and strong signal by the senior management of individual entities regarding the need to transcend agency-specific identity and allegiance.

Recommendations

1. Build transformative and empowered leadership

69. It is essential to develop transformative United Nations leaders at the global, regional and country levels who can deliver collective outcomes, who can work in relation to the United Nations pillars and with actors outside the United Nations and who can strongly advocate for United Nations principles, norms and standards. This requires leadership that is supported by strong knowledge and expertise, attuned to country realities including across the development, humanitarian, and peace and security fields.

2. Strengthen and reposition staff capacities at all levels

70. The staff required to deliver on the 2030 Agenda must shift from a set of skills of the type needed for the Millennium Development Goals to the type of expertise needed for the Sustainable Development Goals. At the country level in particular, a new balance needs to be struck between technical and management profiles, as well as specialization in relation to cross-sectoral integration. Staff development should be updated to ensure that capacities are upgraded in critical areas, ranging from technical skills in innovative financing and partnerships to skills related to communications, technologies needed for the kind of highly collaborative models of work and a much more externally oriented outlook required by the 2030 Agenda.

3. Facilitate and incentivize a mobile global workforce

71. Facilitating collaboration and staff movement as much as possible between different United Nations entities will enable and incentivize one United Nations mobile global workforce with a shared mindset that cuts across entities' individual flags and identities, supported by a human resource management system that rewards mobility, expedites recruitment and ensures flexibility for deployment of staff across entities. The approach of the High-level Committee on Management to move towards a global United Nations system workforce is intended to address this challenge. This is an important first step that will require the commitment of all entities of the United Nations system to be fully developed and put in place.

4. Advance gender balance throughout all United Nations ranks

72. An improved United Nations development system will also start with greater engagement of women throughout its ranks. Despite some advances in ensuring gender balance, progress has been slow and uneven and major gaps remain, particularly at senior decision-making levels. Moving forward, the transformative change envisaged in the 2030 Agenda will only be effectively supported by the development system if concrete action is taken at each level to ensure the effective selection, retention and promotion of women.

C. Partnership approaches

73. The 2030 Agenda recognizes partnership as a key means of implementation. A United Nations development system that can truly deliver must recognize and harness the potential of all actors, building on their capacity, reach and resources. There is an intrinsic need to engage in partnership, strategically, effectively and efficiently to respond to today's demands. The development system has made

significant strides in building partnerships, and almost every entity has developed a mechanism for launching and nurturing such efforts. Yet partnership approaches across the system continue to present fundamental challenges. Primary among these is the lack of a clear definition of partnership. Different players have a different understanding of what is entailed and who is involved in a partnership with the United Nations. This lack of clarity extends to the role, practices and responsibilities that the United Nations as a system is expected to take on for engagement with external players.

74. Notwithstanding the diverse forms that partnerships can take and the range of roles that the United Nations development system has in partnerships, the system should adopt a common set of standards. To date, however, no system-wide approach or mechanisms exist to ensure the necessary transparency and accountability of partnership efforts, and the capacity of the various entities to engage in partnership varies widely. External actors wishing to connect and support the work of the Organization often lack clarity on how to approach, enlist and work together with the United Nations, and, in some cases, seize the opportunity of different practices across the system for their own interests.

75. Multiple calls by Member States for more clarity on the partnership activities of the United Nations development system are confronted with a capacity gap to assess existing efforts, system-wide needs and the scope and types of partnerships needed, to develop a commonly agreed set of principles and standards and to ensure appropriate oversight. At the same time, the United Nations should retain the flexibility necessary to be an attractive partner open to the realities of the twenty-first century and to be able to tailor partnerships to meet the needs at the global, regional and country levels.

Recommendations

1. Adopt a flexible system-wide approach to partnership

76. The United Nations development system should develop a system-wide approach to partnership that includes common principles, standards and guidelines to ensure that partnership policies and practices with all players are coherent and aligned with the values and purposes of the United Nations. Key elements of this approach would include having clearly defined parameters and criteria for multi-stakeholder partnerships and, especially in high-risk engagements, having clear and well-defined exit strategies in place for quick termination of any partnership that fails to deliver the intended results. These should build on existing and normative standards, principles and guidelines and practices that are already in use by various entities. Capacities for collecting and sharing knowledge on partnership efforts in the development system should be made available.

2. Ensure appropriate oversight, transparency and accountability of partnership efforts

77. Transparency, oversight, accountability and alignment with United Nations values, goals and mandates are critical and must be ensured in a system-wide approach to partnership, with strong ownership and leadership by Member States. Partnership approaches must be aligned with national policies and development strategies and create space for meaningful participation by all segments of society.

D. Strengthening coherence: the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding nexus

78. Sustainability of development efforts is strictly linked to building resilience, sustaining peace and reducing disaster risk, particularly in the most vulnerable country contexts, and vice versa. However, development, humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts are often carried out in silos. And while there have been efforts at cross-fertilization, given their interlinked nature a step change is needed. Many of today's crises and reversals of development gains are a result of the compounding effect of different vulnerabilities and root causes that could have been reduced or prevented if the development action had been more risk-informed or coherent.

79. Humanitarian and development capacities and expertise are needed to work towards collective outcomes. At the same time, the United Nations needs to retain emergency capacity to be prepared and flexible enough to respond to humanitarian crises. In such situations, addressing humanitarian needs through principled humanitarian action, including through humanitarian response plans, will continue to be necessary.

80. In protracted or recurrent crises, humanitarian action will need to move beyond repeatedly carrying out short-term interventions year after year and move towards contributing to longer-term development gains or, when there are operational constraints hindering their ability to do so in specific contexts, operating in synergy with other actors who ensure that the long-term development outcomes are achieved. Conversely, development actors will need to plan and act with greater urgency to help build national systems and capacities for prevention and preparedness, tackle people's vulnerability, inequality and risk as they pursue the Sustainable Development Goals, including in crisis settings wherever possible, by placing greater emphasis on early engagement and bold steps to reach those furthest behind.

81. For the system to move from delivering aid to ending need, it is essential to develop a new way of working together across institutional divides. This concept was recently embodied in a "commitment to action" entitled "Transcending humanitarian-development divides — changing people's lives: from delivering aid to ending need",[5] signed at the World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 and 24 May 2016. This new way of working will require focusing on collective outcomes, working over multi-year time frames, based on the specific comparative advantages of different actors within and beyond the United Nations system. It also offers opportunities to include peacebuilding where appropriate.

82. Shifting from delivering aid to ending need will be successful only if the structures, processes and financial systems of donors and entities of the United Nations development system reinforce this approach. This requires more flexible and context-specific approaches including joined up needs assessments and risk analyses, the formulation of collective outcomes that the United Nations system will advance through flexible and dynamic funding instruments and an empowered leader with the requisite capacity and profile.

[5] www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/key-documents.

Recommendations

1. **Develop system-wide guidelines and a joint approach on the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding nexus**

83. At the global level, guidelines on options for better joined up approaches to the analysis, planning and implementation of the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding nexus should be developed.

2. **Move towards greater coherence at the country level**

84. At the country level, an overall vision for collective outcomes should be developed, embodying the "one country, one United Nations framework" approach, when and where appropriate, ensuring complementary multi-year planning and encompassing development needs and protracted crises requirements, all based on joint analysis and comparative advantages. This approach should provide sufficient flexibility to allow for development, humanitarian and peace action to be carried out simultaneously, with due respect for the distinct principles that underpin each area and, where activities across the three spheres are demand-driven, risk-informed, mutually reinforcing and reflected, as appropriate, in joined up planning frameworks. This approach will need to be developed in a manner which preserves the space for separate, targeted and nimble humanitarian action and response plans, fully respecting humanitarian principles.

3. **Ensure measures to safeguard and mutually reinforce development and humanitarian funding**

85. Strengthening the links between the development, humanitarian and peace efforts should not result in the diversion of development resources to emergency priorities and vice versa. The new way of working is not about shifting funding from development to humanitarian programmes or from humanitarian to development entities but working collaboratively across institutional boundaries on the basis of comparative advantages.

4. **Update the terminology**

86. For the purposes of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, key terminologies, together with new concepts, should be reviewed, as post-crisis "transitions" are not linear or binary processes with clearly identifiable phases. Rather, they refer to a broad and diverse set of circumstances and root causes, including but not limited to complex protracted crises, conflicts, disasters, human rights violations and political crises. Member States should consider changing references from "transition", to better recognize that short-term and long-term activities contributing to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals and leaving no one behind happen in parallel rather than in sequence.

VI. Improving coherence, coordination and moving towards integrated action

87. Efforts have been made at the country level through the "Delivering as one" approach, the standard operating procedures and other measures to overcome the vertical nature of the system. This is a work in progress and it requires additional

energy. Not all attempts to move towards improved coordination and integration to respond to national needs and priorities on the ground have been equally matched by efforts at headquarters. Much has been done at the global level on both the programmatic and management side, and some reform efforts have yet to yield benefits; however, more needs to be done to remove bottlenecks to "working as one". Globally, the system continues to struggle to integrate its ways of working in some areas. In addition, regional cooperation and collaboration across sectors, as well as regional entities and mechanisms, require more work to improve coherence and strengthen the link between the national and global contexts.

88. Long-standing challenges concerning the need for increased coherence and integration, as well as the further requirements of the new development agenda in that regard, are recognized by Member States and the United Nations development system alike. The development system has started important groundwork to address some of these issues. A number of reform initiatives have been introduced in the past two years, and it will take more time before their full benefit and impact become visible and measurable. These changes are aligned with and support the global and national agendas for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and are a vital contribution to the development system, enhancing its efforts. For example, United Nations country teams are already prototyping a new generation of UNDAF with multi-stakeholder engagement framed in a sustainable development context, better informed by joint data and analysis and leveraging the normative and operational strengths of the development system. However, more can be done and the development system has signalled that it embraces a vision for continuing change.

A. "Delivering as one" at the global, regional and country levels

89. Implementation of the "Delivering as one" approach and the standard operating procedures, though voluntary, has been a major step towards greater coherence and coordination. It is now time for mainstreaming all their components, including through the application of a business operations strategy that reflects the needs and realities of the various specific contexts.

90. There is a need for the "Delivering as one" initiative to embody the kind of integrated approaches in all phases of the work, from analysis and planning, through programming, budgeting, operations and reporting, to provide better support to Member States in the delivery of the 2030 Agenda.

91. At the regional level, priority should be placed on building on the agreed division of responsibilities between the regional commissions, the regional United Nations Development Group teams and the United Nations country teams with a view to maximizing synergies between regional and country-level efforts by the United Nations development system regarding the provision of support for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

92. In most regions, coordination mechanisms are already in place and have delivered substantively on different global mandates, including the 2030 Agenda. Moving forward, to further strengthen system coherence, the two current regional coordination mechanisms — namely, the regional coordination mechanisms led by the regional commissions and the regional United Nations Development Group teams chaired by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) — could

benefit from working closer together to develop consistent policy approaches and complementary capacity-building programmes in support of countries, building on the core functions and assets of each mechanism. While avoiding duplication, additional arrangements and/or instruments may be considered to strengthen the regional dimension both within the system and between the system and other regional actors.

93. At the global level, there is need for a culture change to facilitate the coming together of a system that can deliver collective results, based on nationally defined needs and priorities.

Recommendations

1. Maximizing the "Delivering as one" approach

94. It is essential to ensure progress on "Delivering as one" as the platform for United Nations development system support at the country level, including through full implementation of the United Nations Development Group standard operating procedures and related tools, adapted to country contexts and organizational arrangements to ensure coherence, coordination and joint results.

95. At the same time, the system must also move towards "Delivering as one" in all countries, while following the principle of "no one size fits all". This does not imply full structural integration, but it will require greater integration of programme implementation and of operational resources and assets. The United Nations development system should be able to harness the comparative strengths and expertise of each entity, with some taking the lead and others contributing in kind.

96. A renewed approach to "Delivering as one", under the auspices of one leader and an empowered country team at the country level with the requisite authority, which integrates programmatic and operational functions, will help to maximize coherence, impact, effectiveness and efficiency. Efforts to maximize the "Delivering as one" approach should be aimed at having a coherent and increasingly transparent and data-driven system that is able to convene a broad set of stakeholders, as well as ensure closer integration and policy coherence, where appropriate, in relation to the three pillars of the Charter of the United Nations — development, human rights, and peace and security. It would leverage the United Nations system's diverse assets by integrating United Nations analytical and planning frameworks, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes, as well as reporting to Member States. It would also need to generate further efficiencies through scaled up implementation of common business operations strategies and integrated service centres for operational support.

2. The next generation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework: the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework

97. A common vision and integrated planning framework across the United Nations pillars at the country level would require a newly updated generation of planning instruments. The next generation of UNDAF, which could be called the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework, would need to go beyond a mere compilation of agency-specific planning and would be based on the principle of moving towards a "one country, one United Nations framework" approach, built on shared strategic sustainable development outcomes, common needs and root-

cause analysis, risk assessment and management, and monitoring and reporting across humanitarian, peacebuilding, human rights and development activities. The United Nations Sustainable Development Framework would be linked to a common budgetary framework and, where applicable, a joint resource mobilization strategy and would be endorsed and monitored at the country level by a national steering committee co-chaired by the Government and the resident coordinator, with the participation of United Nations country team members. This would be standard, without prejudice to agency-specific country programme documents and procedures. Pooled funding instruments would be promoted. The United Nations Sustainable Development Framework would capture the core content and context of the 2030 Agenda and provide a system-wide overview of the key United Nations activities and system-wide functions in a given country, while being aligned with national planning cycles and national Sustainable Development Goal frameworks. The United Nations Sustainable Development Framework would build on the interim UNDAF guidelines, would be designed to promote a comprehensive, rights-based and inclusive country analysis, would focus the United Nations engagement on areas where it has the greatest impact and would be based on joint policy and programming approaches and harmonized business practices.

3. A different kind of regional support for the "Delivering as one" initiative

98. The "Delivering as one" initiative needs to be supported differently at the subregional and regional levels, with significantly strengthened coherence and coordination between United Nations regional entities and coordination mechanisms and stronger ties with regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations. The respective roles and the interface between the two current regional coordination mechanisms should be further clarified and reconsidered taking into account the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2016 statement of collaboration between the regional commissions, the regional United Nations Development Group teams and the resident coordinators and United Nations country teams in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is a good first step that needs to be developed further with a view to having a clearer division of labour between the regional offices of United Nations entities and the regional commissions to ensure coherence and complementarities.

4. Align headquarters to match efforts on the ground

99. Efforts at headquarters must enable and match efforts on the ground. A more strategic and coherent results-oriented culture is needed; system-wide leadership must be developed and institutional barriers to the success of field-level initiatives must be removed. To do so, the United Nations Development Group Plan of Action for Headquarters should be implemented in full and monitored regularly to ensure the advancement of structural reform measures required at the headquarters level to ensure coherence, effectiveness and accountability at all levels. The regional United Nations Development Group teams will need to play a key role in supporting United Nations country teams in the implementation of the "Delivering as one" initiative, including the full implementation and monitoring of the standard operating procedures and the business operations strategy; ensuring common business operations, services and operational efficiencies; and promoting the sharing of data and analytical products among regional United Nations Development Group teams and regional commissions.

5. Map the mandates of entities to bring them in line with the 2030 Agenda

100. A forward-looking mapping of mandates currently guiding the entities of the United Nations development system should be carried out to ensure that the activities of the system collectively support the priorities of the 2030 Agenda and remain relevant in the new development context. The mapping should be presented to the governing bodies of the various entities for their consideration and should be discussed under the aegis of the strengthened Economic and Social Council to ensure a coherent and strategic alignment throughout the system.

B. Resident coordinator system

101. Numerous General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions have stressed that while UNDP manages the resident coordinator system, it is owned by the United Nations development system as a whole and that its functioning and funding should be participatory, collegial and mutually accountable within that system. In fact, the resident coordinator represents the entire United Nations system on the ground.

102. Since its establishment in 1977, the resident coordinator system has evolved. As all United Nations resident coordinators are also UNDP resident representatives, measures have been put in place to act as a functional firewall between the dual functions of the United Nations resident coordinator and UNDP resident representative. These measures include a management and accountability system, to ensure that resident coordinators act as impartial, transparent and inclusive leaders, and the establishment of the separate post of UNDP country director. However, feedback from some entities of the United Nations system suggests that challenges remain with the implementation of the functional firewall, as all resident coordinators, given their dual role as UNDP resident representatives, remain accountable for UNDP business.

103. At the same time, the resident coordinator is often left to his or her own means to deal with ownership and accountability in a resident coordinator system that continues to rest more with a single entity rather than with the United Nations development system collectively. In addition, if international humanitarian assistance is required, the resident coordinator is usually tasked with the humanitarian coordinator's functions, though these are supported by separate offices, funds, structures and governance arrangements.

104. The success of delivering coherent results at the country level largely depends on strong, coherent, effective and accountable leadership from the United Nations resident coordinator and the United Nations country team. However, the relationship between the resident coordinator and country team members is not based upon a binding and committed agreement. In particular, the resident coordinator has no formal authority over the members of the country team and no means to coordinate their programmes during the implementation phase. It should also be noted that mutual accountability between the country team and the resident coordinator is often not practised or fully implemented.

105. Finally, resident coordinators should be able to count on the stable and predictable resources needed to fulfil their mandate effectively. The United Nations Development Group has been implementing a system-wide cost-sharing arrangement

since 2014; however, the costs of the system place heavy burdens on contributing entities and the system falls short of funding. The United Nations Development Group has commissioned a review of the cost-sharing agreement in the second half of 2016 to generate proposals on ways to further develop it to address the effective needs of the system, in the context of supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Recommendations

1. **Take steps to strengthen the resident coordinator system and ensure impartiality and fairness**

106. The United Nations development system should ensure full implementation of the management and accountability system, including by implementing all necessary measures for an effective functional firewall between the role of UNDP as manager of the resident coordinator system and the management and delivery of the UNDP programme. At a minimum, as stipulated in the management and accountability system, every resident coordinator/resident representative should sign a delegation-of-authority letter assigning to the second-ranked UNDP official authority for operational management of the UNDP country office the representation of UNDP within the United Nations country team and resource mobilization for the UNDP-specific country programme. All delegation-of-authority letters and relevant job descriptions should be made public on the United Nations country team websites, and resident coordinator performance assessments should be adjusted accordingly. In addition, the United Nations Development Group should establish an enhanced dispute resolution mechanism in order to enforce its guidance note on United Nations country team code of conduct and working arrangements, which covers resident coordinators and all senior leadership of United Nations country teams and which reflects the agreed mutual accountability framework.

107. In working to ensure coherence and integration of the United Nations country team, resident coordinators should be accountable for the implementation of a joint resource mobilization strategy published against UNDAF, including inter-agency joint programmes and pooled funding mechanisms. Furthermore, every effort should be made to streamline the coherence and synergy of development and humanitarian coordination and action on the ground.

2. **Ensure appropriate funding in support of the resident coordinator mandate**

108. The system-wide cost-sharing arrangement that supports the resident coordinator system should be fully implemented. Relevant governing bodies of the entities that contribute to the funding of the resident coordinator system should ensure that resources are allocated in a timely manner and in full to allow the resident coordinator system to perform its functions. This is particularly important for the contributions from the regular budget of the United Nations. The forthcoming review of the cost-sharing agreement should present concrete options to improve this arrangement in order to meet the funding needs of the resident coordinator system.

3. **Bestow appropriate authority on the resident coordinator**

109. Merely calling for further empowerment of the United Nations resident coordinator is an insufficient measure to support integrated and coordinated approaches

at the country level. Resident coordinators and United Nations country teams must have the authority to fully carry out their respective functions. For the resident coordinators, this should include being able to call on the best capacities across the system, to mobilize and distribute pooled funds, to make the final decision on strategic objectives in UNDAFs and to incentivize United Nations staff to contribute to shared United Nations results. Resident coordinators and United Nations country teams should have an appropriately resourced country funding envelope to manage system-wide functions and contribute to the evaluation of the performance of representatives of entities, and United Nations country teams should be entitled to contribute to the assessment of the performance of the resident coordinator.

C. "Operating as one": business practices

110. A wide range of mechanisms and business practices have been introduced to move towards increased coherence in terms of functions, programming and shared results at the global, regional or country level, and these need to be further advanced.

111. At the same time, existing collaboration mechanisms can be improved further to move towards integration of functions, programming and shared results at the global, regional or country level and to enable the more outward-oriented approach required to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. In addition to a renewed governance structure, a new funding architecture and revamped organizational arrangements and capacity, as well as a new way of working across the United Nations pillars and across development actors, the United Nations development system needs better integration of back-office functions.

112. In the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group were requested to present plans for the establishment of common support services at the headquarters, regional and country levels, based on a unified set of regulations and rules, policies and procedures, in the functional areas of finance, human resources management, procurement, information technology management and other administrative services. These plans were to be reviewed by the Economic and Social Council and approved by the governing boards of funds, programmes and specialized agencies by the end of 2014, for implementation by 2016.

113. Efforts to that end have been made through the standard operating procedures, which are mandatory for "Delivering as one" countries and voluntary for other countries, and the business operations strategy to improve the cost-effectiveness and quality of operational support processes. In addition, a number of tools and guidelines for integrated and joint operations have been developed by the High-level Committee on Management in the areas of procurement, human resources, financial management and information and communications technology, which have been implemented with success, primarily in the business operations strategy pilot countries. More effective communication and stronger managerial guidance from headquarters is essential to mainstream the integrated operational approaches that are already available.

114. Efforts are ongoing, but many country offices and operations management teams have reported that there continue to be barriers to modern, efficient and joined up operations in support of the functions of the United Nations development

system. At present, commonality at the field level is very difficult to achieve. There continue to be limitations to "Operating as one," as each entity continues to maintain its own functions in areas such as finance and treasury, human resources, procurement, enterprise resource planning systems and administration. There is a need for better coordination of the provision of common support services, as there continues to be significant potential for savings.

115. Harmonization of United Nations agency processes and systems remains an important instrument for avoiding duplication and reducing transaction costs. It has often been operationalized through minor policy adjustments, which have made it possible for different entities to "mutually recognize" best practices to accept each other's policies and procedures. Rapid access to services from whatever agency has the operational support needed or can deploy them quickly and effectively is particularly important in complex country settings. This approach has proved to be successful in many areas, such as the solutions of the High-level Committee on Management for joint procurement and common global and local banking. Implementation now needs to be scaled up to enable the United Nations development system to achieve operational savings at the global, regional and country levels, and the system would benefit from a mapping exercise to identify which operational areas should be considered at each level.

116. Several entities have established global service centres that have achieved economies of scale and reduced costs by removing the need for local transactions in many process areas. Entities that have established centralized service centres may make available to other entities upon request services that represent best practices.

117. There is a growing need to promote further integration of back-office operations of the United Nations development system, with a view to a wider roll-out of operations in a phased approach that reflects lessons learned and is compatible with other efficiency measures. The High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group should collectively work towards building an open policy framework for future collaboration. The United Nations Development Group should request that all new guidance documents from headquarters are explicitly aligned with the respective entity's commitment to common business operations.

Recommendations

1. Implement and adapt the standard operating procedures in all countries

118. The standard operating procedures should be rolled out and implemented in all countries, while being adapted to individual country contexts and organizational arrangements. Agency programme and operational guidelines should be aligned with the standard operating procedures. Full implementation of the standard operating procedures across United Nations country teams requires alignment of agency programme and operational guidelines. In some cases, this needs the approval of the governing bodies of the various United Nations entities, and Member States should call for this throughout the United Nations development system. At the same time, the standard operating procedures should be further developed to match ways of working with the new requirements of the 2030 Agenda.

2. Roll out the business operations strategy for all

119. Equally, the business operations strategy should be rolled out to the United Nations country teams, with flexibility in agreeing on what services should be integrated after conducting a robust strategic planning and cost-benefit analysis. United Nations country teams should initiate the business operations strategy process in conjunction with the development of their country-level framework.

3. Scale up integrated service centres

120. The establishment of common business centres can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of United Nations development system operations. The development system should consider increased use of such centres, adapted to the individual country context, using the lessons learned from different alternative approaches, based on evaluation. Examples include the integrated service centres for country-level joint operations in Brazil and Viet Nam and the integrated service centres for global service in Denmark, Hungary (United Nations Children's Fund) and Malaysia (UNDP).

4. Review rules, regulations and procedures to facilitate support for South-South and triangular cooperation

121. Challenges remain in the modus operandi of the system to facilitate South-South and triangular cooperation. While some entities have made exceptional provisions for the specific requirements of South-South and triangular cooperation, such as low transaction costs and speed of delivery, longer-term solutions are needed by reviewing procedures on specific modalities for supporting activities of South-South cooperation to ensure a systematic approach that meets the needs of such cooperation rather than relying on exceptional case-by-case procedures.

VII. A new kind of quadrennial comprehensive policy review

122. By adopting a universal, transformative and ambitious development agenda, Member States have raised the standards for the United Nations development system. The development system will have to transform itself, but this will require a phased approach. The level of changes that the nature and scope of the 2030 Agenda demand will inevitably need short- and medium-term steps to enable, and provide time for, important changes to be made in the longer run. The development system has already embarked on a number of initiatives to embed the 2030 Agenda in the ways the system works at the global, regional and country levels. Member States must now chart the course for the development system with a dynamic and strategic quadrennial comprehensive policy review. This is a first step in the longer-term positioning of the system.

123. The 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review offers an opportunity to address issues that will require attention in the short and medium term while simultaneously laying the foundation for areas that will require longer-term change. It is essential that the momentum of the bold and transformative steps taken in the adoption of the 2030 Agenda is reflected in the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the opportunity to advance the initial phase of this approach is seized prior to the adoption by the General Assembly of the next resolution on the review, in 2020. This is particularly needed in the areas identified in the Economic

and Social Council dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system, namely functions, funding, governance, organizational arrangements, partnership approaches, capacity and impact.

124. To set the strategic direction of operational activities for development in the very first years of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, it is vital that the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review provides the foundations for the United Nations development system to rise to the challenges of the new development agenda, both at the entity level and system-wide. The opportunity to set the course for the next four years must not be missed.

125. A new kind of quadrennial comprehensive policy review would be one that provides strategic direction, focused on outcome rather than process, defining the role the United Nations development system can play in the realization of the 2030 Agenda. This would include funds, programmes and specialized agencies alike, for a truly system-wide strategic approach to monitoring and reporting. This may require consideration for making the quadrennial comprehensive policy review a system-wide tool that offers strategic guidance by Member States to the system, clarifying the vision ahead, through underlying principles around functions and division of labour on the basis of outcome-level results. The new quadrennial comprehensive policy review should clarify the systemic core functions of the development system and accountability mechanisms, identify ways to foster inter-agency collaboration in different contexts, including to overcome the development, humanitarian and peace and security divides to prevent shocks, build resilience and sustain gains in peace and development. It should set the stage for areas of reform that support key reform outcomes, including strengthening system-wide transparency and governance, enhancing coordination and collaboration across the system, creating efficiencies to maximize resources available for results, empower United Nations country teams to work together in a more coherent and integrated manner and enable the United Nations to respond to national needs and priorities while staying focused on mandates and comparative advantages. This should be done in a simple and focused manner, starting with its name. The new quadrennial comprehensive policy review could be renamed the "strategic policy review".

126. The 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review is the first step forward, and it should:

- Reflect the essence and spirit of the 2030 Agenda by strategically guiding the United Nations development system towards "Operating as one"
- Transform itself into a tool for strategic guidance across the United Nations development system
- Address the whole United Nations system, including the specialized agencies, without prejudice to the important role of the oversight bodies and their specialized mandates; members of governing boards should contribute to building the integrated system that they themselves requested when they adopted the resolution containing the 2030 Agenda (General Assembly resolution 70/1).

127. First, the functions of the United Nations development system must be aligned with the 2030 Agenda, driven by the system's comparative advantages, and aimed at delivering demand-driven results at the country level that are

tailored to national needs and anchored in national ownership. Moving forward, the United Nations development system will need to focus on:

- Providing integrated normative support for implementation, monitoring and reporting on global agreements, norms and standards
- Delivering integrated, evidence-based policy advice and thought-leadership, to support countries in their efforts to embed the Sustainable Development Goals into national and local plans and budgets and report on their national implementation
- Convening stakeholders across constituencies, facilitating knowledge-sharing, South-South and triangular cooperation, including regional cooperation, and leveraging partnerships to embrace the strengths of all development players
- Delivering capacity development assistance, including by improving the quantity and quality of comprehensive and disaggregated data
- Providing direct support and service delivery, particularly in least developed countries, countries in special situations such as landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries affected by conflict or at more risk to suffer the impact of climate change and disasters.

128. **Second, the functions of the United Nations development system must be supported by appropriate funding flows and financing mechanisms.** The alignment of functions as the driver and funding as the enabler rests on the importance of funding practices geared towards the delivery of the 2030 Agenda. Funding should incentivize the entities of the United Nations development system to work together as a whole and ensure that the system can carry out its core activities most effectively. This will require:

- New ways of enhancing core resources with efforts by Member States and United Nations entities alike, including by building trust with partners and institutionalizing structured financing dialogues
- Complementing core funding with well-designed pooled funding mechanisms that can make earmarked funding more flexible and predictable; the United Nations development system must draw a clear distinction between core and non-core activities and incentivize higher-level earmarking to broad strategic outcome areas
- Deepening partnerships with international financial institutions
- Exploring the possibility of engaging more fully in innovative funding approaches that can mitigate risks and leverage larger private resources
- Capitalizing on the potential of the United Nations development system to mobilize resources as a system to finance core, system-wide functions
- Publishing timely, transparent, harmonized and open high-quality data on funding, including by adopting the International Aid Transparency Initiative standard for reporting data by all entities of the United Nations development system, sharing experiences and lessons learned from the strong performances of some funds and programmes in this area.

129. **Third, the United Nations development system must be guided strategically through governance structures that allow the system to be accountable for**

system-wide results. In order to ensure that the system is able to respond to the implementation of a highly complex and integrated agenda, it is critical to enhance horizontal governance while strengthening the capacity of governing bodies to provide strategic guidance and ensure accountability, both in the specialized mandates of each entity and across the intersectoral nature of the 2030 Agenda. This will require:

- Strengthening the role of principal organs through better use of existing mechanisms and platforms, including at the regional level, and considering new and/or improved institutional set-ups to strengthen governance, particularly horizontal governance, such as holding meetings under the purview of the Economic and Social Council to guide system-wide functions
- Revitalizing governing bodies with new ways of working, better geographical balance and multi-stakeholder participation to steer specialized activities towards multifaceted achievements and ensure space for the voices of all stakeholders.

130. **Fourth, the ability of the United Nations development system to deliver results hinges on improving its functioning through strategic, effective and efficient presence on the ground, a workforce with the right skills and incentives, the capacity of strategic partnership to harness the strengths of all development players, and the ability to cut across the pillars of the work of the United Nations while leaving space for innovation.** To maximize capacity and impact, the United Nations development system should be organized in a manner that enables it to:

- Gear its presence at the country and regional levels to models that are flexible, that are configured to national needs and priorities, that take advantage of modern communication technologies and that are collaborative, both internally and with external partners
- Leverage the regional dimension, with a clear division of labour among relevant regional entities, to ensure coherence and coordination, in particular with regard to data, statistics and the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, and ensure complementarities and synergies between the two regional coordination mechanisms
- Motivate and equip staff with updated skill sets, also enabling and inspiring them to transcend sectoral and institutional boundaries, guided by transformative and empowered leadership
- Readily and openly engage with external partners with a coherent system-wide approach and proper oversight across the system, building on best practices to truly open the United Nations to the twenty-first century
- Recognize that development, humanitarian and peacebuilding activities contribute to prosperous and peaceful societies in parallel rather than in sequence and that institutional divides must be overcome to realize the promise of the 2030 Agenda.

131. **Fifth, efforts to improve coherence and coordination must be sustained and move towards integrated action to respond to the integrated, universal and yet targeted calls of the 2030 Agenda.** This includes building on the important efforts and innovative strides already taken by the United Nations development system and

pushing onwards for a new generation of mechanisms, instruments and practices to operate as a system at the global, regional and country levels. Member States have an important responsibility in expecting and sustaining these efforts. These should include:

- The full implementation of the United Nations Development Group standard operating procedures for United Nations country teams, adapted to individual country contexts
- Maximization of "Delivering as one" as the platform for United Nations development system support at the country level
- A new generation of the country development framework, the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework, which can capture the core content and context of the 2030 Agenda and provide a strategic system-wide overview of United Nations activities and functions on the ground, in line with country needs
- A resident coordinator system with the authority, neutrality, experience and skill sets required to lead an empowered United Nations country team on the ground, as the cornerstone of the system's collective support for the 2030 Agenda
- The mainstreaming of integrated operational modalities, especially but not only at the country level, through common back offices, further harmonized business practices and the mutual recognition and adoption of best practices.

132. **Finally, while the Sustainable Development Goals are interdependent, several priorities cut across the entire 2030 Agenda and the system-wide functions of the United Nations development system. These areas have been of significance in past triennial and quadrennial comprehensive policy reviews and will continue to be important.** In the short, medium and long run, these issues will continue to be key in meeting the demands of the 2030 Agenda. These include:

- Eradicating poverty in all its forms and manifestations. Poverty eradication remains the priority of the United Nations development system. The system must make every effort to leave no one behind, combating inequality and addressing the multifaceted challenges that lie at the heart of the scourge of poverty.
- Building and developing national capacities, both technical and functional. This incorporates supporting national statistical capacities to collect and analyse high-quality disaggregated data to be used to guide policymaking, planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting. It includes supporting and utilizing, wherever feasible, national financial systems, procurement systems and national evaluation capacities.
- Leveraging and facilitating South-South and triangular cooperation, particularly as demand for these services is expected to increase with the growing capacities of many developing countries and the nationalization of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. This includes strengthening the normative and operative work of the United Nations development system in this area, maintaining a strong focus on gender equality results and increased investments in gender expertise across the system.
- Sustaining actions to strengthen the implementation of human rights principles and standards, upholding people's dignity and human rights while working for their empowerment as active partners for sustainable development.

133. Moving forward, as we embark on the fundamental changes that the 2030 Agenda requires for a United Nations development system that is "fit for purpose", bearing in mind the importance of strategic monitoring and following up on the short-, medium- and longer-term objectives of the development system, it will be important to assess, adjust and recalibrate interventions. In doing so, caution will be taken to focus not only on the short-term, easy-to-measure results, but also on longer-term achievements that are inherently more difficult to measure, such as in the areas of capacity development and institution-building. In this regard, the quadrennial comprehensive policy review should not only define the strategic direction of the development system, it should continue to facilitate an important mechanism for providing feedback to Member States on progress made in that direction. To achieve this, it will be necessary for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review to:

- Harmonize results-based management systems across the entities of the United Nations development system
- Strengthen system-wide evaluation
- Define clear mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on quadrennial comprehensive policy review progress, including a new, robust quadrennial comprehensive policy review monitoring framework closely aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.